

MUSIC

Mix and match

Compilations cure dance fever

BY JIM RADOSTA



VERVE REMIXED
Various Artists • Verve Music Group

This has got to be one of the most ingenious ideas ever floated by a greedy record company executive desperate to cash in on songs that otherwise would be locked away in a vault collecting dust. Verve Music invited the world's most talented DJs and producers to tinker with their original landmark recordings and create all-new classics.

I predict this cool disc only will increase in popularity as the weather heats up. It's appropriate, then, that it includes Sarah Vaughan's "Summertime," reworked by UFO into a chilling, atmospheric mind-melter.

Obviously, these turntable titans are lucky to have such great source material to reinterpret. Among the other vocalists on the disc are Carmen McRae, Shirley Horn and Ella Fitzgerald.

Nina Simone appears twice with "Feelin' Good (Joe Clausell Remix)" and "See-Line Woman (Masters at Work Remix)." Billie Holiday also does double duty: "Strange Fruit (Tricky/Tool Remix)" becomes a hypnotic trance, while "Don't Explain (dZihan & Kamien Remix)" puts her silky voice in front of a percussive backbeat.

Without a doubt, the best track is Rae & Christian's bouncy update of Dinah Washington's "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" It's enough to make me want to delve into her catalog and discover what I've been missing out on all these years.



ULTIMATE AFTERHOURS WITH DJ ESCAPE VOL. 2
Various Artists • Groovili-cious Music

What a life DJ Escape must live. This 23-year-old not only gets to spin tunes at some of the world's best clubs, he also has a full-time scouting gig at indie dance label Groovili-cious Music.

As if that's not enough, he has great taste, too. *Ultimate Afterhours* contains 15 strong tracks, many by artists he personally signed to the label.

The CD is packed with 77 minutes of music guaranteed to keep any party pumping. Highlights include "No More Games" by Laid featuring Derek Conyer, "The More I Love You" by MFF featuring Andrea Martin and "Caught Up" by DJ Disciple featuring Mia Cox.

My favorite selection is the trippy "Wonderland" by the Psychedelic Waltons featuring Roisin Murphy. Upon further investigation I realized I was drawn to this track for a good reason: It was co-produced by Nellee Hooper, the mastermind behind some of Madonna, Sinéad O'Connor and Soul II Soul's greatest hits.



PARTY TIME 2002
Various Artists • Groovili-cious Music

All it takes is one song to render certain compilations essential. For *Party Time 2002*, that track is "Come on Down," quite possibly my all-time favorite dance ditty.

You see, this brilliant creation combines two powerful elements: the voice of disco diva Crystal Waters ("100% Pure Love") and the theme to *The Price Is Right* (the best game show ever). It sounds cheesy—and it kinda is—but the hook is undeniable.

Throughout the giddy five-minute track, Crystal beckons her lover to "party with me...shake it loose and let it go." It never fails to cheer me up.

Fortunately, the other 26 tracks on this two-disc collection are equally addictive. DJ Escape again demonstrates his fine taste by digging up obscure songs that are sure to become dance-floor favorites.

Live Element's clever "Be Free" takes a Belinda Carlisle sample and layers it over a groovy rhythm. "Drink to Get Drunk" by Different Gear v.s. Sia—a melancholy rumination on alcoholism—is a surprisingly poignant choice for a collection filled with otherwise shallow songs.

"Groovejet (If This Ain't Love)" by DJ Spiller reminds me of every disco classic from my childhood. And Sarah McLachlan's "Sweet Surrender" is transported to new heights with an epic, space-age remix.



PARTY GROOVE: THE WHITE PARTY
Various Artists • Centaur Entertainment

The song that makes this CD essential is "Break 4 Love," which is credited to Peter Rauhofer + The Pet Shop Boys = The Collaboration. The remixer and my favorite queer duo come together to create the intense, urgent centerpiece of DJ David Knapp's latest compilation.

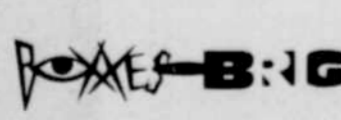
The other standout track is a revved-up version of "And I'm Telling You I'm Not Going." Rosabel manages to breathe new life into the *Dreamgirls* show tune without detracting from Jennifer Holliday's soaring vocals.

The CD is dedicated to Graham Berkeley, one of the gay victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. That might help explain the inclusion of Full Intention's ultra-patriotic yet groovy "I Love America," which features snippets of speeches from President John F. Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Knapp also includes a couple of innovative remakes to round out the collection. Daphne Rubin-Vega of Broadway's *Rent* gives Elton John's "Rocket Man" a gender-bending twist, and Sir Ivan covers John Lennon's timely peace anthem "Imagine." **J**

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